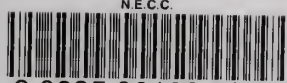


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SPRING

PARNASSUS

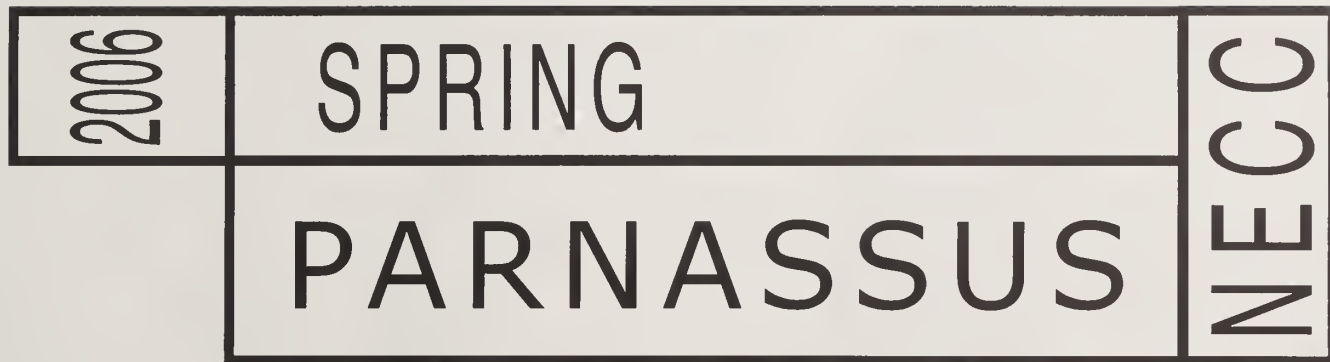
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INTER-ARTS MAGAZINE OF NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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INTER-ARTS MAGAZINE OF NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Parnassus is the name of the mythological mountain of hope of the nine muses who inspired humankind in the arts.

The policy of the editorial staff has been to select material for the magazine democratically. We have read each work submitted and viewed all artwork. We voted to determine eligibility; a majority vote for a piece meant publication. Parnassus provides an opportunity for new artists and writers to reach others; it's a showcase of Northern Essex Community College student creativity.

PARNASSUS profile:

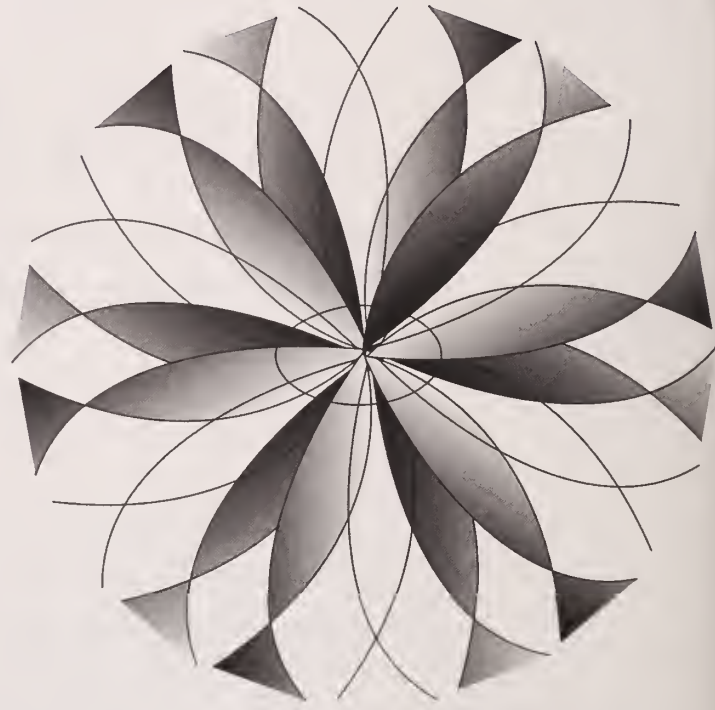
Front Cover title: Self Portrait • Artist: Tiffany Oswiak
Back Cover title: Shadow Boy • Artist: Linda Germain

PARNASSUS dedication:

This edition is dedicated to retiring art professor Dianne Edstrom.



	JOHNA INFANTI
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	PATRICK SHINE
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	MATASHAYAN
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FATHER ANTOINE RIZK



LEOPARD AND BIRD	ROB CARLSON
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A leopard padded slowly through the tall grass of late October, raising his head, watching the clouds crawl across the sky. Then a bird, sailing down into sight singing.

A song or epic flickering for a moment on the top of a well lit mountain slope, wings lit by starlight on the eve of some inevitable tomorrow. An infinite field of image and sound and possibility, flashing at once across a lonesome eye, flashing and then shifting, evolving like a species, like a flower unfurling its petals, or a leopard stalking silent through the grass. The storm of silence. Both the dreary and the shining, truths and falsehoods, circling round like a slight whirlwind rising in pitch, from a purr to a roar to a purr and then silence again. The heartbeat of an animal elsewhere lost, stranded cold on a frost blasted tundra while daylight fades into darkness and so again, into silence drifts a birdsong.

A leopard yawned regret, resting in the shade beneath a tree, early November, knowing hunger and lost chance. Then a bird lands stoic on a limb, warbling wisdom and hope.

A birdsong with unforgettable words. Follow on a lifeline to the guise of eternity, past the regrets and failing strength, each breath onward to illusion, and when obtained; it shatters with reflection, it shatters with impoverished hearts, into shards of no more knowing, into shards of tired words and looped out lifers, nodding resigned to a swelling wave. And there on that crest, maybe a vision of the sky, or maybe a sun beam falling swiftly to the eyes of jarred vision. All of these things seamless without a hitch, and broken in every stretch, the tired laws, the sacred trusts - the falling shoulders of an exhausted night. All of these things find somewhere silent when cycles catch on the edge of themselves, and then unfurling, majestic into nothingness; into a void of free chaos; there goes all energy, lost with an exhalation, lost in a down ticking breath.

A leopard goes to sleep.

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GOURD

LINDA GERMAIN



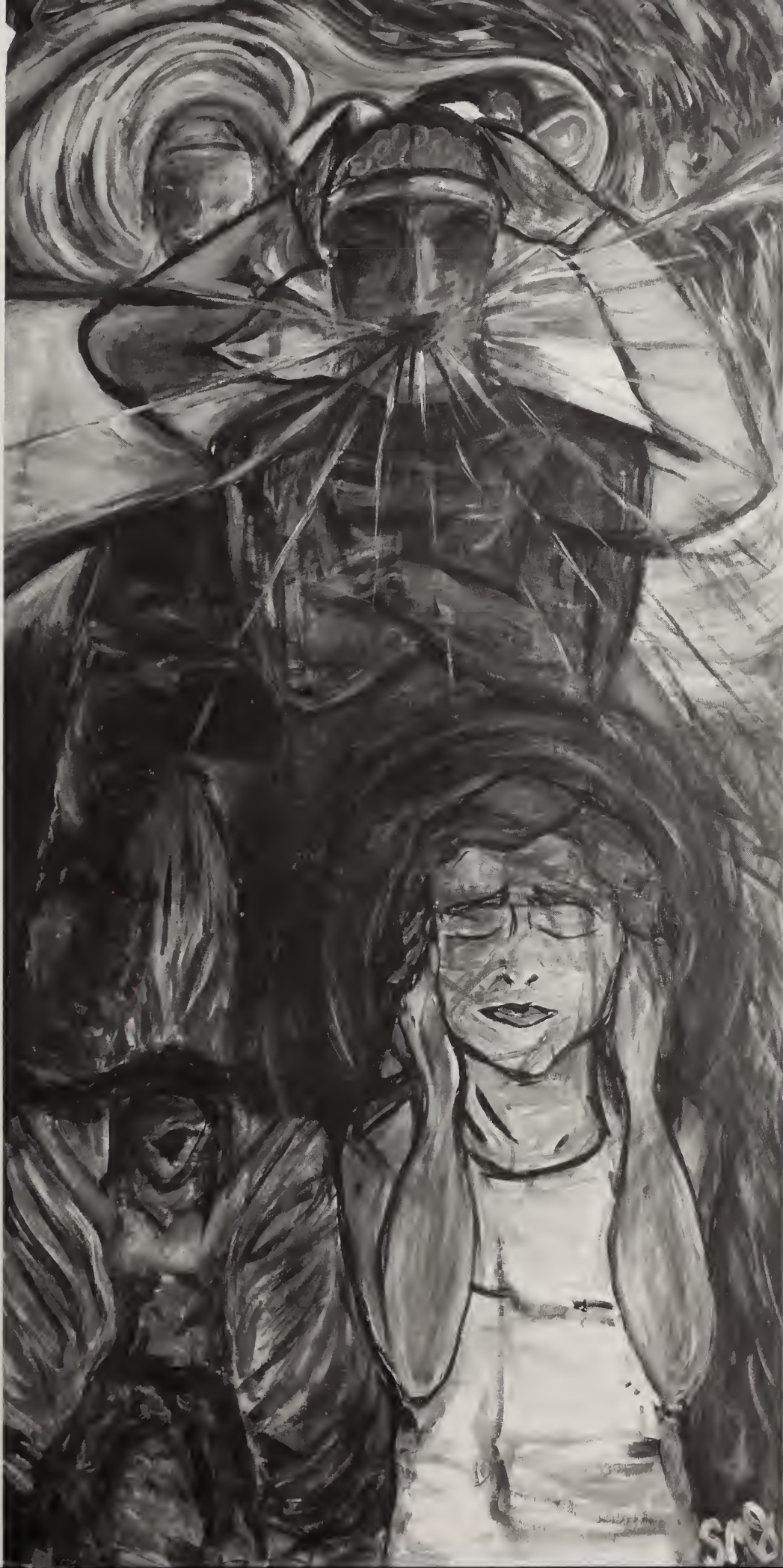
Cheer up, sad little emo kid,
It doesn't matter, what your parents did.
So take your guitar, write a depressing song.
Maybe it's time, and you should just move on.

Your room is painted in a sad, sad grey,
The same color as every one of your days.
Try to remember life before you hid
And cheer up, sad little emo kid.

Maybe your feelings just aren't justified.
I know that you're feeling all mixed up inside.
Maybe someday you'll be compelled to live,
So cheer up, sad little emo kid.



Before this bowl is taken
I will dip
And like a sponge
Soak you in
Then
In the quiet hours
I will twist and squeeze
Memories of you
All over me



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PARNASSUS

BOSTON

RACHEL RUD



This is not a normal story of redemption. I am saved and doomed simultaneously. Quite literally, I will love and be loved to death. With every last breath I strive to make sense of my situation. Real life tests before teaching, gives before taking away.

Love given to me. Life taken away.

It plays no favorites, sits in no one's corner and is seldom fair. These truths are hard for me to remember whilst, everyday, I see others win their fortunes, both material and spiritual. For most of my life I had it in my mind that my day would come, proof that The Powers That Be have not forsaken me. Each day that passed delivered a disappointment that killed my hope a tiny bit, but then, when my desire to acquire the richness of life comes to lay on its deathbed, a small miracle would rekindle that fire in my heart to burn as brightly as before.

Something like that came to me, when my hope had died and my heart had sunk. My work was suffering, customers complaining of my dour demeanor, supervisors of my waning sales totals. I was a clerk for a chain of art and craft shops, a job I clung to since college. Apparently an Associates of Science didn't much to make me any more hire-able than I was without it. I sought closure in the bottom of a bottle, and drank every night. I searched for a nice place, small, cozy, with like-minded company. It took a while before I found it, a place to call home filled with others who just came back from the funerals of their hopes and dreams. A place where we sang songs celebrating the poisonous liquid we poured down our throats.

In that small bar I found my own personal support group, an anti-alcoholics anonymous. The downtrodden and brokenhearted that never made true their success stories, and got used to the idea that they never will. Our bitter tears were always transformed into a sweet joyful clamor by that frothy medicine the bartender administered for two dollars per pint. We were divorcees, workplace failures, the poorly adjusted and semi-suicidal, and we all drank ourselves to complete numbness. There were sad stories, risque songs and fights over women. There was The Nurse, a call-girl who helped most of us through our hardest times with her own brand of

sexual healing. She had to have had the entire Kama Sutra memorized; I know from experience that her healing touch is well worth the price paid for just one session. She convinced me that I was very bad off, so I laid with her almost weekly.

I couldn't tell whether her brand of therapy was working, but I did know about the warmth of her body, her feather touch and her voice as she screamed my name with each orgasm. I knew her epithets of love. She believed that I would be happier if I had some tenderness in my life. I believe that I would have been happier if I didn't have to pay so much for it, but I have been so intoxicated on her wine that I, without fail, paid her price to taste her flesh.

"You look miserable," The Nurse would say, swooping in for the sale of her skin and affection just after I had been suitably sedated. The very suggestion that I was miserable while being that drunk made me so. My face would crumple up. I would turn away. Tears would flow, caused by some old trauma that had scabbed over years ago. Her arms, so wonderful, so expensive, would encircle me to turn me to her and she would kiss each tear that ran down my face. Drawing me off the stool, she would lead me out of the bar, through the streets with her arm around my shoulder, and me crying silently. Us walking in somber drunkenness through the yellow buzz of the halogen lamp light to her apartment, which she shared with her husband. She would give me a night of passionate therapy, and in the morning remind me to pay for her services.

"Just leave it on my dresser, or give it to Jon." Jon was her husband.

I lived in a very dark place. My only comfort came from a beer tap and a liquor bottle and my only pleasure came from a manipulative whore. Work offered no help and my family disowned me for my alcohol dependency. In every sense I was completely alone in my

continued...

world, mendless and loveless, making the dark my home.

All that stood unchanged until I met Mister White. I lost my job from my sinking performance. I lost my apartment because I couldn't make rent. Destitute, hopeless and desperate, I sat at that bar, my life savings in my pocket freshly withdrawn from the bank, drinking cheap beer until I could barely function. My remaining wherewithal was used to carry me to the river's edge, near the mouth where it clashed with the incoming tide and creating a temporary doldrum. The moon loomed large and full, a silent witness to my supposed last moments. It threw its lunar light onto the nighttime world, casting it in an ethereal silver hue. This is how I wanted to remember my life: a pale, dark nighttime wonderland with all the imperfections glossed over. I stood there on the retaining wall that held back the river's waters, looking out over the city, the turbulent river mouth and the tranquil ocean, memorizing what could very well be the last thing I see.

"Beautiful, isn't it," said a stranger coming up from behind me.

"The moon makes the night so perfect, so beautiful. It enchants every little thing with its magic. Sometime it makes me wish that the Sun would never rise," he said.

"That standing wave over there presents a very nice metaphor. The river's current meets the ocean's tide going the other way. They don't clash, but compromise. The ocean flows back over the river, and the river's flow creates an undercurrent," he said, coming up next to me. He took a look down into the river and started talking again.

"I think that if we jump in here, with our legs together and arms against our bodies, we'll fall through the back-flow and into the undertow. We'll be sucked out into the ocean where we'll resurface not far from the coast, so the rising tide will wash us ashore."

"Do you have it in your mind to jump?" he asked.

"Will you jump with me?" he asked.

I don't quite remember my reaction, being befuddled on alcohol and all, but I might have nodded since he grabbed my wrist and leaped, bringing me with him. The chill shock of the riv-

er water threatened to draw my breath out, but I held it tight. The turbulent current shook me, the salty water stung my eyes, not that I could see much tumbling along that dark riverbed with the undercurrent shoving me out to sea. My shoulder smashed against the rocky bottom just before the violence of the doldrum thrust me up to the surface, where the dim moonlight blinded me. The strange stranger, Mr. White still had me by my wrist and was trying to drag me away from the violent river mouth. We were in the ocean with the raging standing wave growling behind us, threatening to suck us back under again. Numbed by the shock, sobered by the cold water and exhilarated by the experience, I swam after him. We were laughing the whole way to shore.

I asked him about what he meant about the standing wave metaphor before we jumped.

"Exactly what that doldrum did, life will rescue you just before you drown, but it's your own responsibility to keep yourself saved," he said. "If you don't, it will try to smother you." He helped me get to my feet after staggering up himself. The fight with the water drained us both, and I was drunker than I thought. I had to lean against Mr. White, and he against me to maintain his damaged balance. We walked like old friends, arms slung around shoulders, manically laughing away our excitement, back into town for some fermented nourishment.

We found a bar that was still open. The Nurse was outside, alone, smoking a cigarette and watching us, appearing like a pair of drunk drowned rats, drag ourselves into the establishment. Mr. White and I plopped wetly into adjacent stools. The bartender regarded us coolly until I offered her a soggy ten for a first round of drinks.

"We just exercised our right to live," Mr. White told me over our refreshments, "Risking it is only one way to feel alive."

"The Kama Sutra is more than just a sex manual; like lovenaking, there's more than just one way to live," he said.

The Nurse came inside just as we were ordering a new round. She set down at the bar not far from us. Mr. White was discussing a project he was hired to work on, something about a spirit room, but I wasn't paying much attention to him. I was turning his analogy between the Kama Sutra and the right to live over in my mind. Not liv-



ing as in breathing, but feeling alive and loving it, making love to your life. The Nurse came to mind at the very mental mention of lovemaking, being different from sex in that love is selfless giving with no promise of reciprocation and sex is had purely for pleasure. She, The Nurse, tried to replace love with sex in the lives of her patients, and touted it as some form of alternative therapy. The very thought of subscribing to her brand of medicine, just to give her a dose of what she sought to sell became more and more distracting and alluring the more and more I drank and thought about my tumble in the turbulent river mouth, of how lovely she looked in the dim barlight.

I wanted her.

Finishing my third drink, I descended upon her smiling. I was about as charming I could be

hopped up on alcohol and adrenaline. She could smell my energy and excitement. I could tell by the way her eyes lit up when she saw me. She asked why I was wet and stank of sea, but I offered no explanation. We spoke of other things, friendly things. She was worried that I might have done something stupid, now she knows I did and was happy that I survived. I told her that I might not need her therapeutic touch, kiss and grind any longer, but I wanted just one more session for a happy send-off. She smiled.

"Of course," she said. At this time, Mr. White faded from my conscious mind, becoming nothing more than just a damp shadow at the bar, serial-killer smiling at me as I left with The Nurse. She led me to her apartment in her usual way, but not in mine though. I wasn't sad about anything. We got there just as Jon was in the bed-

continued...

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PARNASSUS

ELLIE TAORMINA

LOVE



room making the bed. She didn't wait for him to leave before passionately kissing my mouth, her pull-back punctuated by the slamming door.

She smiled joyfully, but I couldn't figure why. I didn't have the brainspace to think about it, being too busy blocking out thoughts of her husband in the other room fully aware of what was going on. He was probably trying to read a book, or watch television, distracting himself from the wild screams that came from his wife administering sex to her patient. It was just her job, but did she have to scream so loud, articulating the patient's name and shouting testaments of ardor to them? Could she have just gotten some other occupation? I tried dodging these thoughts as I gave selflessly to, and took ravenously from, her.

Afterward she tried to light a cigarette, a very common post-coitus ritual that she partook in reliably. She had some trouble extracting one from the box, but her shaky hands and numbed fingers made it impossible for her to properly flick on her lighter. I reached over her, she was turned away from me, and took the lighter to light the cigarette for her. I asked how much the night would cost me. She didn't respond, she just lay there smoking quietly and curling her back, pressing it against my body. The cigarette smoke drifted above us like vapor twisting in the twilight that shown through her bedroom window. The soft, white din of sports news from the living-room was singing us to sleep.

"With you, it was never like this," she said, almost a whisper.

"Not that it was anything bad, though," she said, turning to her back.

"But I don't know what to think," she whispered, taking a last drag on her cigarette and slowly exhaling it into the space above us. She never quite explained what she meant.

In the morning I was dressing myself in crinkly sea salty clothing as The Nurse lay nude, watching me. I asked again about the amount I owed.

"I'll think about it, but you don't have to pay me today," she said. The girl got out of bed, her bare body shimmering in the bright morning light. I had her. I had all of her. I knew this just as much as I knew which direction down was. She gave me a long lingering hng, trying to press her essence into my skin. She stood close and

buttoned up my shirt while I listened to Jon banging around in the kitchen, making himself breakfast.

I ate at a news shop that served egg sandwiches and bagels with coffee while I read a newspaper. I always seemed to buy more papers being unemployed than I normally would employed. Completely wrapped up in the classifieds, I didn't notice Mr. White sitting at my table across from me with a coffee of his own until he slammed his hand in the middle of my paper to get my attention. I jumped back in my chair, but did not fall over.

"Looking for a job?" he asked, smiling like a jackal.

"I've got something for you," he said, leaning over the table.

"It's got something to do with my spirit room," he said, leaning ever closer. Smiling ever larger.

Back in the day, when Freemasons were still Scottish bricklayers, Celtic castles were built with a spirit room, a closed-off area with a young girl, typically a virgin, trapped inside, to give the building a soul. These days that sort of thing is considered murder, so what some superstitious construction workers would do is make closed-off rooms with writing on the walls, ceiling and floor, or leave messages on the backside of dry-wall before it's mounted into place. Mr. White was an architect and construction director who was hired by a nu-age pagan couple who wanted a love-themed spirit room to bless their marriage. They thought that he would be perfect for the job. I felt that he was a slight bit unbalanced. I guess that you would have to be somewhat eccentric to accommodate these superstitions with such fervor. He felt that I had something to contribute to this all-important inaccessible room, like a love story or a spot of poetry to paint on the walls.

I doubted that I had anything to give to it.

"Oh, I'm sure that you can think of something," he said.

"For now, I want some help adorning it," he said.

"I'll give you money to buy things like pillows, comforters, silks and rugs," he said. "You can keep the change."

"But I'll pay extra if you can come up with something to write on the walls," he said, close enough to whisper to me, which he was. I need-

continued...

ed the money. I also needed a place to sleep. I agreed to the job, and Mr. White sat back down and started discussing my working budget and arranging a visit to the room which I would be decorating. We left together after I was done eating. I left the paper at the news shop; I didn't need it any more.

We visited the spirit room that same day. It was smallish, but not obscenely so; it was about the size of a child's room. It had three walls completed; the fourth wall came across half-way so we could bring in the decor and then quickly seal it up to trap the enamored spirits inside. There were three lights in there, the bulbs hidden and the light cast by them too dim to work by, so construction lighting was also installed to help the workers. Inside there was a girl in overalls with short messy hair painting suggestive artwork on the walls, leaving places within the pictures for my own contribution. I walked around the large ventilation fan humming away on the floor and entered the room. I took my cue from what the young artist was painting and tried to envision the place as a secluded love nest. I saw thick carpets on the floor, pillows scattered everywhere and a large, round bowl shaped bed dominating the room with a slow table nearby to hold refreshments.

I started shopping that afternoon and kept going into the evening, at which point I stopped working to drink. I had everything sent to the construction site before I left for my bar. The Nurse, the girl, was at the bar again, trying to round up more patients. Upon seeing me, she came to me. We spoke some, friendly things. She was worried about how I was getting along without any place to sleep. I spoke to her of my new job, and that I should be fine sleeping in my car for a couple nights. She offered me her bed. I asked about the cost.

"No cost," she said. What about her practice?

"No patients tonight," she said.

We continued talking, drinking and being merrily. She was smiling. I didn't know why she was so happy. I never bothered to ask. We drank ourselves to dizziness and left together, holding each other up. I was thinking about Mr. White, the man who saved me from suicide, body and soul. Caught up with the idea that I would sample some more of the girl's costly drug free of charge. I thought back to what I learned from

Mr. White, about lovemaking with life. I thought about my dive into the river with him, about the chill water and the blinding moonlight. I shivered a bit from the memory, and the girl held me closer to try to warm me. Jon was making the bed again when we arrived.

"We need to make him think that you're here for another session," the girl told me. I didn't argue. Why would I refuse a dose of the skin I was addicted to?

I continued shopping all through the morning into the late afternoon. The girl came with me, helping me choose seductive colors and soothing patterns. She even came in handy at the winery, where we were purchasing an appropriate offering to the blessed spirit room. She chose a vintage that was both costly and highly recommended by the shopkeep.

"Buy two bottles," she told me.

"Make sure that they're both from 2000, their best year so far," she said.

Everything I bought was sent to the construction site and piled up inside the basement, where the spirit room was. The things I bought the day before were untouched, since Mr. White insisted that I be the one who set everything up in the room. When the girl and I got there, almost all the construction workers went home. The only people there were masons. The masters directed the journeymen and the apprentices, who were putting the stones in their appointed place. We walked by the stonemasons, into the basement. We worked together decorating the room, laying the carpets, bringing in and making the bed with the satin sheets. Silks and heavy comforters were laid on it. Large pillows were scattered around the floor, making it hard to walk around, not that anyone would be doing much walking in this room. The low table, small and unobtrusive, was set with our offerings of bread, fruit and wine. We took the extra bottle and went out to dinner when we were done.

Hot food felt good in my empty stomach. Good liquor made me feel all warm happy that evening. The girl asked if I found a place to sleep, which I didn't. I was too busy working. She offered me her bed again. I asked about the cost.

"No cost," she said.

"I'm not taking patients tonight," she said.

"But we need to make Jon think you're in for more therapy," she said.

continued...



TRI-POD

KEITH CROFT

That spare bottle was good when we drank it that night.

Jon made noise while preparing a morning meal for himself.

I had breakfast with Mr. White, letting him know that I was done with my task. He asked if I came up with anything write on the walls. I didn't; I was too busy working, of which I spoke. I was also very busy with my Nurse, of which I kept silent.

"Why don't you spend a night in the room?" he suggested.

"It'll inspire you," he said.

"Bring someone nice with you and christen that bed properly," he said.

"It can only help."

The girl came to mind. I had a bed that night, and it wouldn't hurt to offer it to her. I decided that I would see her that evening at the bar, playing the role of the Sexual Healer, The Nurse. Waiting for sunset, I spent the day watching the artist who painted murals on the spirit room's walls kneel on the bed, taking photos of her work.

"For my portfolio," she explained.

I watched the stonemasons shape rough ashlar into usable stones with chisels, making the sides smooth and glossy with rasps and files. The apprentices were hoisting the finished stones up, which the journeymen shaped to the masters design. They were placing the blocks in their proper spot in the building. No stone was insignificant. Even those buried inside the walls and floors were placed just as carefully as the ornamental ones that surrounded it. I watched them for hours, wondering if I was the rough ashlar, or the smooth stone ready to be placed. Was I an ornamental stone, for the whole world to look at and admire? Or was I one of those that would never be seen, but whose function was no less important?

These thoughts carried me to the bar, where I only drank water. She, the girl, came to me. She said that her husband kicked her out of the apartment she shared with him. She told me that he hated her job, and sought an annulment. He had the papers and she signed them before he pushed her out the door and locked it behind her. Quiet Jon, who never complained about us messing the bed he just finished making, who serenely watched sports news while others, men

and women, made what they thought was love to his wife, finally stood up and made a terrible noise. The girl, somehow, couldn't understand why. She was distraught and came to me to cry on my shoulder. She asked me if I found a place to stay. I told her I found a bed for the night, and offered it to her. She asked about the cost.

No cost.

I only wanted her touch.

We left the bar and went to the construction site. The building was nearly finished. Everything was done besides the spirit room and a part of the chimney that the masons labored until late to complete. They were working tirelessly when we got there. We passed by them and went into the dark building. It was medium brick house, cedar interior with Celtic designs carved into the woodwork. The basement was just a stone floor with cinder-block walls, in the very center of which was my spirit room. The workmen were almost moved out, and only one construction light array that shown on the bottom of the cellar stairs remained, along with unused lengths of iron heating pipes scattered around. The blessed room was still open. The girl's mood lightened when she saw the interior, the smooth-paneled walls and their explicit images. The large bed with simple foods nearby. She had no idea that I would be sleeping there that night. She thanked me for taking her as she walked unsteadily to the bed. She got in and motioned me to her.

Even under the heavy covers and silks of the spirit room, I could still feel the chill waters of the river. She felt my shiver and held me even tighter. The stark, sterile hum of the light array that remained in the basement lulled us to a drifting daze. It was shattered with a loud shout and a crash.

Startled, I snapped awake. The crash came again, sounding like metal against stone. The girl was awake too and was staring at the opening. The crash came, reverberating against the barren walls of the cellar. I jumped out of bed and struggled into my clothes. I left my shoes off; I was in a rush to check on the noise.

There came the crash again, and I left the spirit room.

Another crash, and the girl told me to be careful.

I stepped out onto the cold, bare cement floor. My toe came in contact with one of the scrap

continued...

ELYSSA NOTARGIACOME	
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lengths of pipe. I picked it up, holding it in both hands. The crash came, and I walked up behind the construction light array to see Mr. White, Jon and a couple of the stonemasons standing at the bottom of the stairs. Mr. White was crouching with a pipe in his hands. He was banging it against the floor. Why? I stepped out into the light for answers.

"Think of anything of anything else for that room?" he asked, almost rhetorically. "I did," he said. "There's just one more thing I would like to add," he said. "That thing is you." He stood up straight and readied his pipe for a swing. Jon and the stonemasons were smiling. I couldn't think about why. I was busy defending myself. Mr. White ran up to me and swung hard across and I had to swing back to deflect his blow.

PANG

The noise of our pipes colliding resounded loudly off of the naked stone walls. I was defending myself from the man who saved me completely. He gave me a job and the creative outlet that I hungered for. Why was this happening?

"You were saved because my brother wanted closure," Mr. White said, swinging.

PANG

"I couldn't let you die while Jon wished to kill you himself," he said, swinging.

PANG

"His desire for your blood made him ache."

PANG

"Recent developments only made him hate you more..."

PANG

"...you and his wife."

In the circling echo of our fight, I heard the girl scream. Instinctively, I spun around on my heel. Through the glaring light of the array, I could see a large man drag her out and beat the back of her head with his fist until she stopped moving. I was frozen. While I was worried about Mr. White, I couldn't have seen the mason leave the group around Jon to go beat the girl in the spirit room senseless.

"We came to a perfect solution, one medicine for two diseases," he said.

"We are going to seal you both in that room," he said.

"Sounds nice, eh? Eternity with the woman you're addicted to," he said.

"I just wanted to draw you out to help Jon get something out of his system."

The large man tossed her limp body back into the blessed room. I dropped my pipe, but heard two hit the floor. I turned around, into a punch. It pushed me back and down. My blood splattered scant drops from my mouth onto the cement floor, a ghastly contrast of red on white. I wiped my face and turned to address my attacker. Jon was above me, and struck me one more time before I fell.

I was falling again, down, down, down into that icy river. This time without Mr. White holding my wrist. The strong cold currents of unconsciousness held me tight for an eternity. An eternity later I awoke in a dim room, on a bed with the girl.

She stirred too. We looked around ourselves, wondering together how long we'd been sleeping. Dried blood covered my mouth. On the table was the wine, bread and fruit, left for us. There were a couple of other things added to the fare. There was a corkscrew and one wine glass, with a roll of money, a marker and a note inside it. The note was from Mr. White.

"I'm positive that you'll think of something," he wrote.

"Just pen it to the walls when it comes to mind," he wrote. "I know that the money won't do you much good there, but a promise is a promise," he wrote.

I, in turn, wrote this. The story of a grave injustice and strange blessing. The girl is here. She smothers my rage under her kisses, soothes my depression with her touch. I still don't believe in sexual healing, but in the healing power of love. I love her, and she has no choice but to love me back. I will not die happy, but I know that I will die peacefully with her here, keeping me warm, keeping me safe, keeping me sane.

It took my life which was replaced with love. It's not the perfect transaction, but I'm happy with it.

Now I know where I belong, set within the structure, never seen, whose purpose is unknown, but all-important. We will bless this house with our love.

JOHN LAWRENCE







amor, te quería amar
tanto era mi deseo a ti
quise pegarme a tu lado
como la noche al jaguar
como la mañana alas naranjas
como los hilos de una alfombra vieja

quise coserte a mi familia "carpeta"
quise enderezarte
por lado de los libros en que
abandoné pedazos de mi vida,
en que están escritas las canciones de mi alma
pinchada.

O, como te quise besar con tal fuerza
que mis piernas fallaban debajo de mi
con tal orgullo que el sol se vuelva en oscuro,
con tal ruido

que los sordos
desconsolados
podrán oír

las rosas y las mariposas
podrán tener lugar
tanto te quise amar.

y ahora me haz dejado
desconsolada y desesperada
como los sordos
y aún masticando
mis propio dientes
navegando aún la tierra por un fin
en un mundo sin fondo.

RYAN HAGEN



I gazed upon your faces, in the darkness
And the light I sought your wisdom in
The stars in the fabric of the night.

I looked in books both new and old, and
Heard my own heart beating I looked to
Find your story, and so I kept on reading.

To think a thing and make it happen
was your gift to all. So simple, yet so
difficult, yet you're there at beck and call
snake, and bee but what is most amazing
is that you are found in me.

Perfect love and perfect peace will make
conditions right and from that place that's
not a place the form will come to light.

I lift my heart to touch you, there is magic
To be done and all I need is knowing that
You and I are one.





	MICHAEL GOULD
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i've become accustomed
 to long drives by night —
 beyond twilight.
 i've conquered the roads
 of new hampshire
 leading through their unscathed
 neighborhoods and to my downfall.
 i've been acquainted
 with the moon at its most
 vulnerable stages and
 with myself at mine
 oh, the long drive...
 i am friendly
 with the gas pedal
 and the carousel of street signs
 i know which gas stations stay open,
 when churches have mass,
 and where the law parks.
 to me, everything is familiar,
 all one town,
 salem, atkinson, derry, manchester,
 and plaistow
 all different names
 to the one card game i know well.
 i've become a wife, now
 to the dirty feeling
 that shakes my bones and says,
 "you may be good, but there have been better.
 you may be beautiful, but there have been better.
 you may be interesting, but there have been better.
 you may be a melody, but i have heard symphonies!"
 and in our marriage i feel still
 like a whore
 and having only gotten paid
 in the long drive home and
 the wasted gasoline,
 the wasted make-up,
 the wasted face,
 the tortured miles.

ELLIE TAORMINA

SHORT WEATHER?





REVELLE TAILLON

to be described as tangible
 love is the core of an
 elemental being in which
 flaws serve as facet;

those strike in one an appeal
 for beauty cast therein;
 revealing the essence of purity
 that delights in truth and rests
 in the arms of devotion;

it is raw and open-a barnacled
 oyster muscled to a grain of sand
 pandora's box; opened in
 32 weeks, an arabian night;

were i worthy once;
 but once,
 to place a kiss on shakespeare's lips
 or smell the dooryard lilaes bloomed?

ah, quixote, was it as real for you as it
 is for me-or a lark, lighting
 upon the unexpected bough
 that bows to the affection?

were i your dulcenea
 found on the sands of time,
 the turning tide that forfeited
 poseidon's daughter,
 has enraptured me

mona lisa, still;
 a mystery
 the seraphim's bow
 arches the lips

for understanding a woman
 is the want of man
 it's really quite simple
 let him know himself first
 then; wonder

a name cannot place the moment

the tide tips the shore
 in uncertain places with
 each increasing ebb;

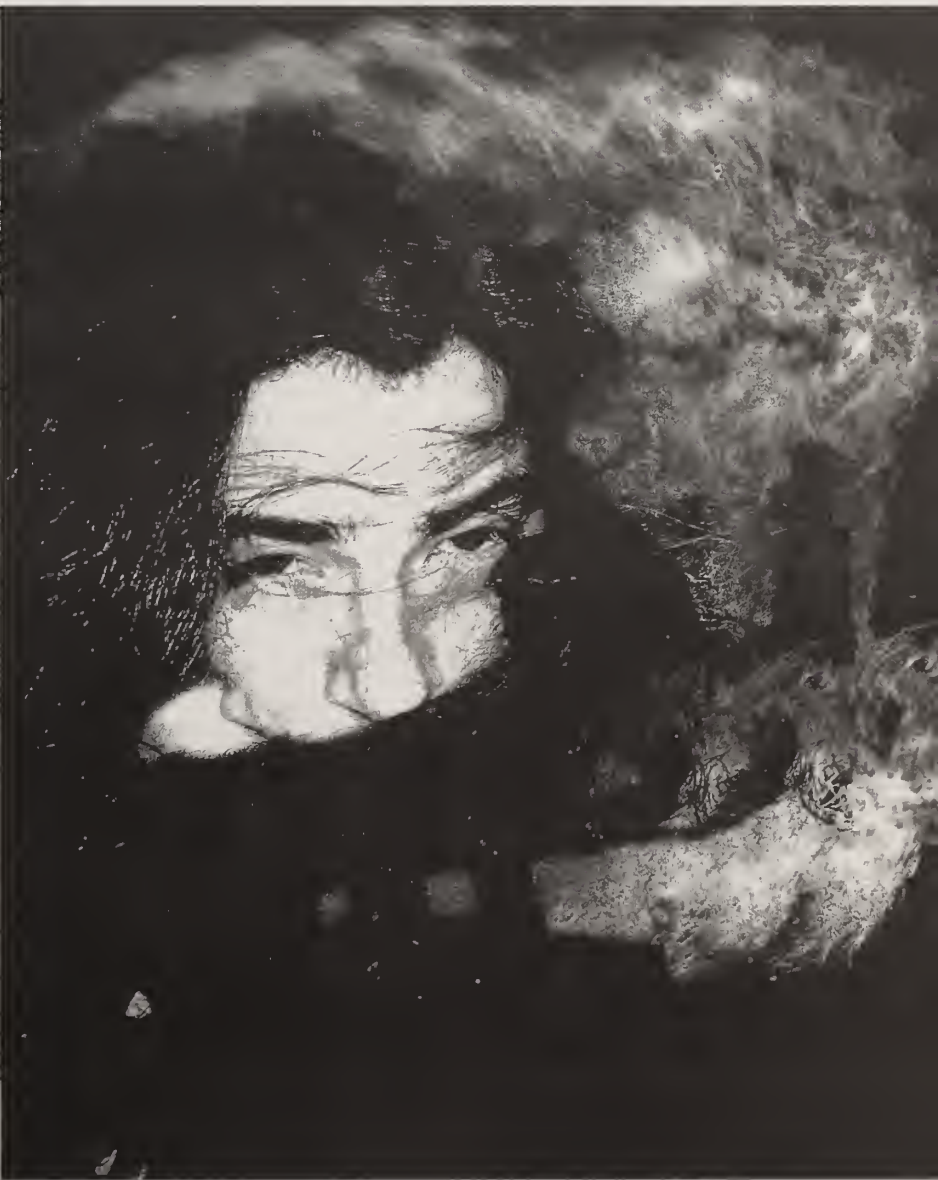
one can only imagine
the shores moored
some lush, others
distant cliffs crashed upon;

ageless surging surf
it's the giving and
taking that replenishes
the spirited soul;

and serves greatly, humbly
a reminder in its constancy
and forgiving nature,
the frailty

with which it should
be held
so precious a gem
when found in flesh.

OSCAR FRIAS





One could do worse than be a time traveler—
You're a mockery of all I stand for;
A cartoon; who's next moves neatly drawn.
Break free from your square bonds;
Leave the gaps for you to pencil in.
There's a lot to be desired of your motivations,
with gaps in space-time larger than comprehension.
Gaps of nothing; just black voids
the likes have been unseen by all.
Growing larger by the day,
a white elephant of sorts,
largely ignored and disallowed to stress.
Time wasted in the void, is time irreplaceable.
Seemingly futile; when time is finally found
the realization of being a day late hits.
Fill the gaps, for you know not when they will close.



CALL OF ROMANCE

JOSHUA THERRIEN

Where are they, those hopeful
Souls that label themselves
Subscribers to passion and
Henceforth, Love? Lost?
Forsaken? Thrust about in
The wind like loose pollen?

Our numbers and ranks are
Whittling and dropping
Like maple leaves in winter
Waiting to be cast underfoot,
Scraped into the corners or
Bagged and discarded at
The earliest of moments.

It has come to mean nothing.
I issue forth declarations of
Love like a deaf mute,
With the chains of society's
Forbidding etiquette clamped
Down upon the tantalizing,
Titillating utterances of my tongue.

Useless are words, if not to
Caress and cosset your heart,
Your soul, your body, all in
One long-winded stroke with
The massaging words that
Press forth from the hypnotic
Suggestive of my lips.

I grope round in the dark,
Like Psyche casting an
Illuminated glance upon
The soft, peaceful visage of
The winged archei in night's
Quietude, only to lose any
Chance of Love forever.

SPRING

CATHY RAJEWSKI

You freed me from slavery.
I could have explored the peaks
And summits of Mount Parnassus
In search of such an inspiring beauty
And come back with the block.

Your warmth and caring
Was like coffee to my tired mind.
Separating my sweet, poetic abundance
From the dark, unflavored abyss.

Your soothing laughter,
Though dreamlike and fantastical,
Has awoken the sleeping creature
That guards the wealth of ideas
From its Van Winkle like slumber.

Potential stirs within as
Your overwhelming smile
Fills my being with energy
The way fragments and broken ideas
Used to fill a corner basket.

I don't want you because you are my muse.
I want you because you are a work of art.
You are my muse because I want you.



GINA LEE KIM

TEGAN VACIRCA-DOUCET



CLOTHCUT FRIEND

AARON FOSS

Hard knocks came easy
Both beaten down
Raining from purple bruised skies
Flitting entities
Saving me from myself
Phoenix in dog tags
Beacon through the torrid vines
Crimson rivulets over fevered face

Still remember when I shouted the first time
Somber eyes were cataract
In the future would corrupt me
But this time didn't reveal the planned vengeance
Of you eating my mattress

Veritable Hydra
A head in each window when the car pulled in
Never understanding why we could sleep on the floor
But we both cocked heads
When you tried to eat dinner at the table
I knew you were sociable

Always listened never talked
But I understood
Dreams
Complaints
Knew you always wanted to be an airline pilot

Flying mottled ebony coat that Cash couldn't have worn as well
Losing detail each step
Quicker than sycamore stained breezes that hit my back
Warm enough to draw your attention

Still able each time
To elicit shy smiles
When sharing that you remain the best woman I've ever shared a bed with

Only knew
You were diseased when you left
Overbearing contagions
Hammer me
Only joy regardless
Worst thing you ever did
Infecting me
With something I can't get rid of
Still see you in everything

GINA LEE KIM





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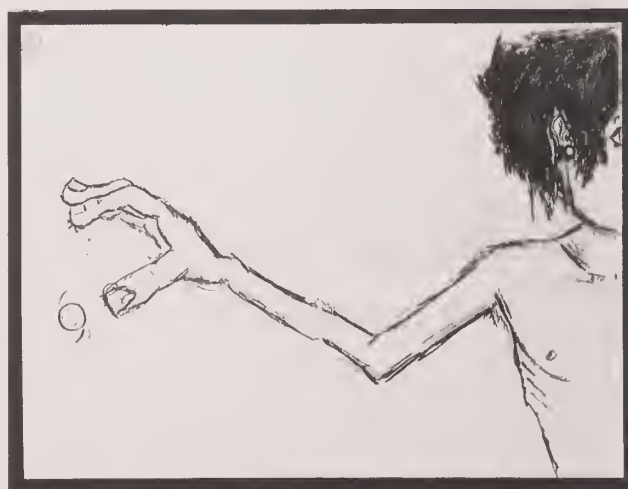
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JAMES WILL

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